

**MINUTES OF THE
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES INTERIM COMMITTEE**

May 16, 2007 – 9:00 a.m. – Room W020 House Building

Members Present:

Sen. D. Chris Buttars, Senate Chair
Rep. Paul Ray, House Chair
Sen. Allen M. Christensen
Sen. Jon J. Greiner
Sen. Scott D. McCoy
Rep. John Dougall
Rep. Julie Fisher
Rep. David Litvack
Rep. Ronda Rudd Menlove
Rep. Rosalind J. McGee
Rep. Phil Riesen
Rep. Stephen E. Sandstrom

Members Absent:

Rep. Jack R. Draxler
Rep. Wayne A. Harper

Staff Present:

Mr. Mark D. Andrews, Policy Analyst
Ms. Catherine J. Dupont, Associate General Counsel
Mr. Thomas R. Vaughn, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Joy L. Miller, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.le.utah.gov.

1. Committee Business

Chair Ray called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

MOTION: Sen. Christensen moved to approve the minutes of the April 18, 2007 meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. McCoy, Rep. Menlove, and Rep. Riesen were absent for the vote.

2. Access to Health Care Coverage

Ms. Alayne Peterson, Director of the Governors Initiative on Health Insurance for the Uninsured, said the governor has taken an incremental approach to the problem of the uninsured rather than attempting a complete reform of health care.

Mr. Norman Thurston, DOH (Department of Health), gave a presentation on "Expanding Health Insurance Coverage for Utah's Uninsured Citizens." The DOH's two primary goals are to ensure Utah children have health insurance and to make it easier for employees of Utah small businesses to get health insurance. He outlined trends in state-based efforts and what has been learned from those efforts.

Mr. Nathan Checketts, DOH, gave a presentation on CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program), the PCN (Primary Care Network), and UPP (Utah's Premium Partnership for Health Insurance). He explained that CHIP benefits are similar to those provided by commercial health insurance. He said the PCN provides benefits to individuals who don't have any other coverage and emphasizes preventative care. He explained that UPP is designed to reduce the number of uninsured in the state.

Mr. Michael Hales, Director, Division of Health Care Financing, said many children in the state qualify for Medicaid but are not yet enrolled in the program. Families with children who don't have health insurance often put off seeking care until they reach an emergency situation. Medicaid frequently ends up paying for many of these emergency services, which is much more expensive than preventative care.

Mr. Jason Perry, Executive Director, GOED (Governors Office of Economic Development), distributed "Utah Health Insurance Exchange." He said the governor has highlighted meaningful health care for

employees as the number one issue faced by small businesses in Utah.

Mr. Thurston gave a presentation on The Utah Health Insurance Exchange. He said the goal of the exchange is to make it easier and more attractive for Utah's individuals and families to purchase health insurance. Key functions of the exchange are to approve products for inclusion in the exchange, provide information to workers and individuals, facilitate enrollment and choice, and collect and consolidate premium payments.

Dr. Catherine Wheeler, UMA (Utah Medical Association) distributed a copy of her slide presentation "Statewide Healthcare Task Force," and "The Uninsured and Underinsured Healthcare Reform," "Statewide Healthcare Task Force Position Statement Executive Summary," and "Position Statement from the Statewide Healthcare Task Force." She indicated that all stakeholders in the state's healthcare system should partner to create a pragmatic, achievable reform package. She stressed the need get the patient back in the center of making choices in an effort to turn the system around.

Mr. Bill Crim, Director, Strategic Initiatives and Public Policy, United Way Salt Lake, introduced Mr. Tom Love and explained that the United Way process to be explained by Mr. Love has just begun.

Mr. Tom Love, Vice Chair, United Way, distributed a folder of information. He said United Way has convened a Financial Stability Council consisting of more than 100 business, civic, religious, and government leaders from around the state to develop proposals that have the potential to improve the quality of life in Utah. Mr. Love said that he hopes that by August the Council will have a specific proposal that will provide a framework for making health care coverage more affordable for families, employers, and taxpayers, while covering all Utahns with quality health insurance. A working group under the Council is integrating its efforts with those of the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce, the Utah Hospital Association, legislators, the governor, and others.

Mr. Kelly Atkinson, UHIA (Utah Health Insurance Association), distributed "A Strategy for Improving Health Care Access, Quality and Affordability in Utah." He indicated that rather than going to a socialized system of medicine, the state should consider superimposing on the existing system some of the very controls that would exist in a socialized system. He noted that UHIA also has other recommendations for driving down health care costs.

Mr. Ken Cooney, Utah Association of Health Underwriters, reviewed "DOI Think Tank Tackles the Problem of the Uninsured." Under this proposal, employers would be given the option of either providing a basic health insurance plan to their employees or to pay a minimum health care tax that would be used to fund health insurance programs for the uninsured.

Rep. Steven Mascaro said solving the problem will involve public/private partnerships. He requested staff to copy and distribute to the members after the meeting "PEHP's Business Model for Small Employers" and asked that the Committee closely consider the model.

Ms. Judi Hilman, Utah Health Policy Project, distributed and reviewed a copy of her slide presentation "Utah Health Policy Project," "The Utah Health Cooperative," and "Introducing...The Utah Health Cooperative." She said monies are not being spent efficiently and that some of the excessive spending is in the administrative overhead of the health care system. She stressed the need to learn from other states.

Dr. Joseph Jarvis, President, Utah Health Policy Project Board, stated the board has developed six principles for health care reform. These principles are: keep revenues neutral, universalize coverage, patient choice, efficient payment and purchase, cooperation not competition, and public financing for the privately delivered health care system.

Mr. Dave Gessel, Utah Hospital Association, stated that the issue of whether health care is a right or a personal responsibility has never been fully decided. He pointed out that over one-third of the dollars spent on health care are spent in the last days and weeks of life, which is a very difficult issue that should be addressed.

MOTION: Sen. Christensen moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Ray adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.